The War Paper for Women

VOTES FOR WOMEN

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

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DEDICATION

To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom; to the noble women who all down the ages have striven and suffered forward, so that day without ending [illegible] to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

THE OUTLOOK

Parliament reassembled on October 16, and at once got to work on the adjourned Committee stage of the Representation of the People Bill. But this ebullition of fervour was more apparent than real; for at the first breath of obstruction from the Ulster Unionist Benches, Sir George Cave, who has charge of the Bill, showed how little reliance may be placed on Government assurances that every facility is to be afforded for its speedy passage into law. By yielding at once to the demand of a minority for the addition of Irish redistribution to the Bill, though this was opposed both by Mr. Duke, the Irish Secretary, and the whole Nationalist Party, the Government has upset the compromise arrived at by the Speaker's Conference and interposed a serious obstacle to the progress of the Bill. Last summer, the demand of the Lords for the report of the Boundary Commissioners was the excuse given for shelving the Bill until the autumn. Now, the Bill will be hung up—possibly until after Christmas—because the Irish Boundary Commission had not had time to draw up its report. When in doubt, set up a Boundary Commission! might be the motto of all enemies of the Reform Bill.

Suffragists, Awake!

We hope that Suffragists will be on their guard against the subtle influences which are thus shown to be at work in opposition to the Reform Bill. Up to the time of going to press, no official announcement has been made that the Bill is to be delayed, because that is not the way the enemy works. The postponement of the Bill last summer was never officially announced; it was compassed by a continual denial of Parliamentary time for its consideration. Unless Suffragists, both inside and outside the House, make it perfectly clear that they will not tolerate similar shelving tactics this autumn, the Bill will be postponed until next Easter, by which time, possibly, it will be discovered that the Isle of Wight has been forgotten, and a new Boundary Commission to settle the redistribution of the Needles and Shanklin Chine will have to be set up! What is perfectly clear is that there need be no postponement at all unless Suffragists again allow it to happen by default. If the adjournment of the House can be moved because three Zeppelin bombs were dropped over London one evening, it can be moved because the Prime Minister's assurances to Labour concerning the speedy passage of the Reform Bill show signs of weakening. The Bill is in no danger unless Suffragists allow it to be endangered. The Government can get it on to the statute book by Christmas—Irish redistribution and all—if it chooses. But it will not choose without strong pressure from Suffragists, who may well exert it on the grounds of Mr. Lloyd George's statement, made during the Irish debate on the eve of our going to press. His undertaking to embody the report of the Convention, fully supported before Christmas, at once in legislative form ought to remove the last excuse for hampering our Reform Bill with a superfluous scheme of Irish redistribution.

"The Put-it-Off Policy"

Under this title the *Daily News* (October 20) published a protest against the Government's postponement, not only of the Reform Bill, but also of the Education Bill and the Bill to establish a Ministry of Health. We agree with Mazzini, who said—"Do not be led away by the idea of improving your material conditions without first solving the national question. You cannot do it;"—and we feel that the reform of the franchise is for that reason of immeasurably greater urgency than the two other reforms which the Government, as the *Daily News* puts it, have "simply postponed, with an unimpressive show of regret, to an indefinite future." At the same time, the co-ordination of the authorities responsible for the public health, and the establishment of a new educational system, are in themselves reforms of a national character; and we may well ask—to quote again from the article already referred to—"What is the meaning and purpose of the new procrastination? . . . The decks thus cleared of every measure of first-class importance, on what is Parliament to concentrate its energies in the session just resumed?"

The Nation's Health

It might have been thought that, at a time when destruction of life on a gigantic scale is being caused by war, some effort would have been made by the Government at least to save the scheme for setting up the new Ministry of Health. No such reluctance has been shown in establishing other new Government departments, whose offices, with their thousands of officials, are gradually absorbing our public buildings and parks. There is, perhaps, a sign of grace in the reply of Mr. Hayes Fisher to the deputation that recently waited upon him from the Urban and Rural District Councils. He intimated to them that he intends to ask the sanction of the War Cabinet for pushing through the House before Christmas a Bill extending the powers of local public health authorities in regard to maternity and infancy work; and we understand that the Women's Co-operative Guild, one of the organizations best qualified to speak on the matter, are prepared to support this lesser measure, failing the larger Bill. If, however, the time at the disposal of Parliament is as limited as we are led to believe whenever the Reform Bill is in question, we unhesitatingly assert that even measures affecting the nation's health should not be allowed to take precedence of the one vital Bill that will give the nation, both men and women, real power to make and administer the laws.

The New £25 "Wife-Allowance"

The £25 "wife-abatement" from income tax is a fresh attempt to tinker with the grave injustice of the income tax laws as they affect husband and wife. These laws start from the fundamental error of treating husband and wife as a single person, and consequently they have hitherto subjected their combined earnings to full income tax, only allowing them an abatement on the total of £120, the same as is allowed to a single person. We understand the concession to mean that this abatement in the case of husband and wife is now raised to £145. If our interpretation is correct it will apply equally whether the income is (1) all that of the husband, or (2) partly that of the husband and partly that of the wife, or (3) all that of the wife. In the last case it might properly be called "husband abatement." In our view the whole principle of the existing law is unsound. Husband and wife ought not to be treated worse than two other persons living together and pooling their resources. At the same time, in all cases of abatement the law ought to take into account the number of persons living on the particular income brought under review.

An Ancient Libel

We are getting tired of reminding the authorities that if any differentiation is to be made between men and women as regards drunkenness it should be made in favour of the women. If fresh proof were needed of the fact that far more men than women drink to excess, we have it in the returns, just published, of convictions for drunkenness for the last ten years, in Great Britain. These make it clear that even as late as the year 1916, when large numbers of men were out of the country, there were 20,720 convictions of women, as against 50,039 men. The discrepancy was still more striking before the war. In 1913, for instance, the number of women convicted was 35,030; the number of men was 146,526. Yet, at the suggestion of the Chief Constable, the Hartlepool licensed victuallers have agreed, for the period of the war, to prohibit women from consuming intoxicating liquor upon their premises. We hold no brief for anyone who drinks to excess; but we emphatically assert that the offence is as blameable in a man as in a woman, and if prohibition is to be introduced at all it should apply to both sexes equally. To insult women—for women are members one of another, and all women are involved in this insult—by branding them as drunkards would arouse our indignation at any time. At a moment when the output of beer is being increased by sanction of the Government, though

foodstuffs are consumed in the process, the action of the Hartlepool busybodies seems to us the height of hypocrisy.

The Future of Nursing

We have received an appeal from the British Women's Hospital, signed by Miss May Whitty (Chairman) and Lady Cowdray (Hon. Treasurer), on behalf of the "Nation's Fund for Nurses." Apart from other considerations, we would willingly bring to the notice of our readers an appeal issued by that admirable band of Suffragists, who, before the war, constituted the Actresses' Franchise League. In addition, any scheme that combines the care of nurses disabled by the war with the care of the future of the nursing profession deserves consideration, for that is much more than a temporary war appeal. We understand that the fund in question is being raised in connection with the fund for the endowment of the College of Nursing, which, when completed, will be the headquarters of the nursing profession in this country, and will stand to it in the same relation as the Royal College of Surgeons, for instance, stands to the brother profession. Anything that elevates nursing to the level of the other professions, and safeguards its prestige and efficiency, will be of double value after the war, when numbers of amateurs will have acquired a smattering of training, sufficient to make them useful as auxiliaries in war-time, but by no means qualifying them for competition with their fully-trained sisters. No doubt, the first plank in the platform of the College will be the State Registration of Nurses, which alone can finally establish the status of the trained nurse.

Items of Interest

One of the first reforms to be considered by the new Swedish Government will be the suffrage for the elections to the First Chamber, so that no Ministry can hereafter hold office except by the will of the majority of the elected representatives of the people.

According to the latest returns, there were last July 700,000 women employed in munition making in this country, as compared with 140,000 in July, 1915.

Miss Ivimy stated at a recent meeting of the British Women's Patriotic League that 6,000 French women were working within the firing zone in France.

In South-East London a salvage factory for Army boots is run entirely by women, under the Army Clothing Department, with the exception of five skilled men.

The Women's Volunteer Reserve has been asked to recruit and organise a thousand women to act as guards at the big forage camps throughout the country. This seems to sound the death knell of the old jest that women are afraid of rats and mice.

Women lens makers, between 18 and 30 years of age, are wanted by the Ministry of Munitions. A free course of instruction, with maintenance, is given: for which application should be made to the Northampton Polytechnic Institute (280, St. John Street, London, E.C.1).

The number of trained women in the Women Police Service reached 612 in July of this year, and is still increasing. In July, 1915, there were only 50.

Mrs. H. J. Tennant has been appointed chief adviser (women's welfare) in the Labour Regulation Department of the Ministry of Munitions.

Miss Righton, of Disley, Cheshire, has been appointed acting surveyor to the local rural council in place of her brother, now serving abroad.

EVELYN SHARP'S TAX-RESISTANCE

(By Our Special Correspondent)

The charge against Miss Evelyn Sharp for refusing to pay income tax on her earnings so long as women remain unrepresented in the Councils of the State, was adjourned last July, and resumed on Tuesday, October 23, in the Bankruptcy Court, Carey Street. The Official Receiver again called for an adjournment, this time *sine die*. Being asked by Mr. Registrar Mellor if she had anything to say, Miss Sharp inquired what was the exact meaning of such an adjournment. The Registrar replied that she would remain an undischarged bankrupt for an indefinite period, and the Court would have the opportunity of taking further steps, obviously suggesting imprisonment. Being asked whether she would now make the official statement of her liabilities and assets, Miss Sharp said she would willingly state her liabilities, because she had none except for the claim of the Crown, which she did not acknowledge; but her conscience would not allow her to state her assets, which, by enabling the Court to recover the money, would be the same thing as submitting to taxation without representation. The Recorder intimated that the Court has nothing to do with conscience, which was, indeed, only too evident to the sympathisers with the cause, filling the public benches. The result is that the petty persecution will continue indefinitely. The authorities have stripped Miss Sharp's rooms of her furniture, even including the carpets. They open, read and delay her correspondence. They interfere with her means of livelihood by depriving her of her books and typewriter and lamp—things as essential to a writer's work as tools are to a carpenter. Some say that in these days the fundamental principle of our Constitution should be ignored. That was not John Hampden's view in days at least as full of peril as our own.

THE WOMAN'S PRESS OVERSEAS

By Harriet Newcomb

(Hon. Secretary of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union)

As the future of the woman's Press is intimately connected with the future of the enfranchised woman and her part in the coming reconstruction of society, a brief account of the women's papers published in the Dominions Overseas may be of interest. The whole question will, it is hoped, form part of the agenda of the third Conference of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union, to be held in London next June. (The following remarks refer, naturally, to women's political papers only.)

In Britain the contrast between the magnitude of the subjects with which each of our Suffrage papers deals, and the limited circulation of all put together, must strike every thinking person. The women's papers Overseas are not in a very much happier condition. Most of them either belong to a political party or to the Temperance cause. The organs of the latter, e.g., the *White Ribbon* of New Zealand, are generally conducted in a most enlightened spirit and cover a wide range of social reforms; but circulation is naturally limited to the supporters of the underlying principle.

In Australia

The only paper which has any claim to be called a newspaper is the *Woman Voter*, the organ of the Women's Political Association of Victoria, Australia (non-party), an ably conducted weekly, from which the best idea can be gained of Australian women's work for political and social reform. But as the views of the editor are as pronounced as, at present, they are unpopular, not only is the circulation limited, but the paper cannot be said to represent Australian thought generally. The *Woman's Voice*, of New South Wales, and the *Woman*, of Victoria, are small monthlies, limited in influence to the circles of the Liberal Party. *Western Women*, of Perth, W. Australia, though not strictly political, gives from time to time good accounts of the political activities of women in that progressive State. South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania have no woman's paper. The need for a Federal woman's paper (non -party) is keenly felt, and plans for the establishment of one have been discussed; but the war has hindered realisation for the present.

In South Africa

The *Woman's Outlook* is the organ of the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union of South Africa; but it is by no means confined to that society. From this excellent little monthly one can gain information regarding all Suffrage activities and women's work for municipal and social reform in every part of the Union, and also in those parts of Africa still dependent on the Crown.

In Canada

Canada possesses in the *Woman's Century* a monthly paper which may give a lead to the women's Press in the other Dominions. It aims to be the organ of every woman's society, founded for serious work, from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and it has a sub-editor for almost every page. When it started Suffragist and Anti-suffragist faced each other monthly, on opposite pages. It has been interesting to watch the gradual extinction of the latter. The paper is very lively and attractive, and the unifying hand of the chief Editor is increasingly felt. It is invaluable to any one outside Canada who desires to watch all the streams of thought and activity among the women of that Dominion.

The "Woman's Page"

In every one of the Dominions the chief newspapers, both daily and weekly, have a "Woman's Page" (or pages), under the care of an able and experienced woman. Too frequently, however, she is not free to admit and edit the material she most desires. Consequently, with a few exceptions, these "Pages" have not kept pace with the Woman's Movement. There is certainly no such slavery to the man-made fashion-world as still degrades many British papers, but in other respects these "Women's Pages" are distinctly behind the times. It is for this reason that the demise through war difficulties of the great New Zealand weekly, the *Canterbury Times*, is so much to be regretted. The directors of this paper, having chosen as their colleague the foremost woman of letters in New Zealand (Miss Jessie Mackay), had the wisdom to leave her practically free. As a result the Woman's Department reached a remarkable level of excellence. Every great movement, every political or social reform, was commented upon and criticised from a woman's point of view. Readers, both men and women, were kept in touch with all that made for progress in the world. Intensely patriotic, intensely feminine, and seeing the movement in this broader light of relation to the whole world of thought and action, Miss Mackay devoted her main energies to the advancement of the cause of women and children. British Suffragists cannot forget with what insight, justice and sympathy the story of their struggle was chronicled in this paper during years when misunderstanding was so easy and misrepresentation almost universal.

In closing, one general point as regards women's papers should be noted. Some of us still think that a page, or pages, in a general newspaper should meet all the needs of the case. For thirty years the women of New Zealand have enjoyed the intellectual and educational advantages of this paper, without any corresponding responsibility, financial or otherwise. The paper fails, and with it the woman's voice is silenced, without her responsibility, without her consent. It is to be hoped that the women of New Zealand, awakened to their loss, will shortly establish an organ of their own, worthy of the example which has been set them, and financially as well as morally under their own control.

CHRISTMAS SALE

In Aid of the U.S. Women's Club

CENTRAL HALL WESTMINSTER, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8

Opening By Lady Cowdray at 3 p.m.

We are delighted to be able to announce that Lady Cowdray, whose name is well known to our readers in connection with women's movements and women's progress, has very kindly consented to open the Christmas Sale, which will be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on Saturday afternoon and evening, December 8. To show their appreciation of the special effort Lady Cowdray is making in order to find time to be present on this occasion, our readers, as well as all United Suffragists, are urged to do their utmost to make the Sale a success.

The maintenance of the Club for another year depends upon the sum to be raised on December 8. The Club members themselves are going to contribute to their uttermost, so highly do they value the Club at 92, Borough Road, where they and the U.S. members meet on common ground. It therefore behoves those who are still better able to do so to support the Christmas Sale in every way that is open to them.

Help can be given in various ways, some of which we indicate below. New suggestions will be warmly welcomed, especially if accompanied with offers to carry them into effect.

STALLS ALREADY TAKEN

Farm Produce and Provisions.—Hampstead and Golder's Green U.S.

Refreshments.—Miss Walford.

Books.—Mrs. Elaine Whelen.

Toys.—Miss Postlethwaite.

General (including embroideries).—Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. McCall.

Useful Articles.—U.S. Club members.

Parcels.—Miss Robson-Young.

Wanted!

Supplies, and promises of supplies, for all the above stalls are urgently needed.

In view of the great difficulty in procuring farm produce and provisions, it is hoped that all who can offer to send anything of this nature, however small, will not fail to do so. Visitors to the Sale will be asked to do their Saturday's shopping at the Sale, so no unpatriotic incentive to spend money on unnecessary food will be involved in a well-stocked provision stall. Game, vegetables, cheese, butter, eggs, fruit, preserves, pickles—all will be saleable.

In many places, we understand, there is no shortage of tea such as now obtains in London—will those of our readers living in such places kindly send us tea, to be offered for sale, or used at the refreshment counter? Miss Walford also appeals for coffee, sugar, and eatables—or money.

SIDE SHOWS

As on former occasions, the side shows will be an interesting feature of the Christmas Sale, as well as productive (we hope) of funds. Mrs. Ayrton Gould has this section of the proceedings in hand, and has already secured the co-operation of Miss McCall, who is arranging several attractive competitions and games, for which small entrance fees will be paid and prizes given to the winners. She will also be in charge of two "dips." One of these will be a Twopenny Children's Dip, for which small articles of all kinds will be gratefully received. The other will be a Threepenny Housewives' Dip, and will include all sorts of articles now worth their weight in gold—such as matches, soap, tea, and sugar—that is, if our readers will show the resource and energy common to Suffragists, and will let us have donations, however small, of commodities of this and similar kinds.

Suggestions for orginal and money-making side shows, and offers to conduct them, will be gratefully received at headquarters.

A STRING BAND

Nothing induces people to buy so readily as a cheerful band. Warmest thanks are therefore owing to Mr. French, who has most kindly promised to supply us with a band of performers, whose services will be most generously given.

OTHER SOCIETIES

The following Societies will co-operate with the U.S. by taking stalls at the Sale, thus contributing towards the expenses while raising money for their own special funds:—

Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, Church League for Women's Suffrage, Free Church League for Woman Suffrage, Independent Women's Social and Political Union, Women's Freedom League, Women's International League, Suffragettes of the W.S.P.U., and the International Suffrage Shop.

TICKETS OF ADMISSION

The price of admission to the Sale will be 8d. (including tax) from 3 p.m. till 6 p.m.; after 6 p.m., Free. Tickets applied for *before the day* will cost only 6d., the amount of tax being in that case defrayed by the U.S.

IMPORTANT!

All applications for tickets or handbills, and, in fact, all communications relating to the Christmas Sale, to be addressed to Miss Brewster, United Suffragists' Offices, 27, Chancery Lane, W.C. 2.

"WOMEN AND DIVORCE"

Do They Hug Their Chains?

To the Editor of VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Dear Madam,—May I be permitted to answer the article in this month's issue of VOTES FOR WOMEN from the pen of Miss P. G. Hogarth. She says it is confidently asserted by opponents of Divorce Reform that "Women will be opposed to anything that weakens the marriage tie." I hope indeed that this is true, but should not deduce from that statement the same conclusion as that at which Miss Hogarth has arrived. She implies that these women are mere man-hunters for their own selfish ends, and that as long as they secure a husband who will support them for the rest of their lives they care little else. Miss Hogarth has entirely overlooked that large and sincere body of women in all ranks of life who hold definitely Christian views of marriage. To these the vows taken in Holy Matrimony are so solemn and binding for life that they shrink with horror from the thought of breaking them, and hold that, even should they unhappily have been united to a man who subsequently turns out to be a bad, or uncongenial, or faithless husband, they are still bound together by their vows. They place the inviolability of their vows before their comfort or happiness, and hold that the faithlessness of their partner does not absolve themsleves from their contract made for life. They know that if, in certain circumstances, life together becomes impossible they have the remedy of legal separation. One knows the misery and evils attendant on this course, but legal separation is a permissible and necessary relief in some cases. Marriage once solemnized can only be annulled by the death of either party to the contract. We execrate the dishonourable breaking of treaties by rulers of nations; let us not condone the same thing in private life, or we shall soon lose sight of principle and practise only expediency.

For the results of cheap and easy divorce we have only to look to America, where already, it is said, serious people are bitterly regretting the system which has made it possible for re-marriage to take place so easily that family life is becoming debased and complicated to an appalling degree. By all means, let there be independence and free choice by women of suitable men to marry—no compulsion for monetary or any other reasons—but don't let us advocate illegal unions or the breaking of marriage contracts, for that is the road to confusion and disaster, nationally as well as individually. The remedy against unsuitable and unhappy marriages lies, I venture to think, along the road of more thorough teaching of *both* sexes of the duties and responsibilities of life, and a more serious view of its purpose.—Yours, &c.,

A SUFFRAGIST WOMAN.

To the Editor of VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Dear Madam,—I certainly think if both parties desire a divorce that that should be sufficient ground for granting it. At the same time, Miss Hogarth seems to forget the fact that a wife with several small children to care for, or one who is too delicate or too old to support herself, might naturally be reluctant to agree to a divorce, unless the law compelled the man to pension her. Statistics show that the greater number of divorces are obtained when the woman is no longer young. Now a man, even when quite old, can marry again and perhaps have another family. Not so the elderly woman. Also, by the time a man is middle-aged he has generally acquired a comfortable financial position. If the woman had not married, she also might have acquired a comfortable financial position. As it is, the elderly divorced woman may be reduced to starvation.—Yours, &c.,

(Mrs.) D. M. C. GRANVILLE.

1, Newton Avenue, New Southgate, N. 11.

To the Editor of VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Dear Madam,—With regard to "Women and Divorce," it seems to me that the change in woman's position should affect her behaviour before marriage. Surely, the woman's movement should tend to make it possible for women to choose their mates in such a satisfactory way that there need be no cause for regret afterwards. Easy divorce seemed more necessary in olden days, when there was more ignorance amongst women and deceptive marriages were possible. Prevention is better than cure, and suffragists should aim rather at the making of happy marriages than at the undoing of unhappy ones.

I am unconvinced as to whether it is wise to make three years' separation a ground for absolute divorce or not; but surely the reason why so many women are against it is not that they dread having to support themselves, but that they fear it would lead to lack of foresight before marriage. As in all things, some few are liable to suffer to save the many, and it seems the lesser of two evils to make divorce difficult rather than easy.—Yours, &c.,

EDITH F. SIMEON.

61, Kingsgate Street, Winchester.

To the Editor of VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Dear Madam,—Those who fear that the great mass of women will be opposed to the proposal for making three years' separation a ground for absolute divorce surely fail to realise the modern woman's attitude towards marriage. The mere use of the expression, "the marriage tie," is a denial of that attitude. To them the sanctity of marriage lies not in the legal, but in the spiritual relations between man and wife; and it is not preserved, but destroyed by the tying together of two people who have ceased to love one another.

It is, I am convinced, true that the majority of women are opposed to any lowering of the already disastrously low standard of morality. This is, indeed, one of the principal reasons why enfranchised women should work for the removal of one of the most fruitful sources of immorality—the judicial separation. Not until the loveless marriage is regarded by law as the thing of horror it is in fact—a thing to be ended in the interest of decency and humanity—can we hope for an improvement in the general attitude towards sex-relationships. That marriage is very commonly regarded as a trap from which there is no decent way of escape is, unfortunately, undeniable. But that there are people who are anxious to perpetuate this view is almost incredible.

I should further like to remind opponents of the suggested Bill that it is not proposed to make it compulsory. Those who believe that nothing but death can free them from a man or woman they have come to abhor can still refrain from divorce. But I protest against their denying to other unhappy people the relief that is not forbidden by their own self-respect.—Yours, &c.,

EDITH M. GRANT.

To the Editor of VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Dear Madam,—I have read the article under the above heading with much interest and profound disagreement. I respectfully venture to suggest to the writer that the real question is not whether women hug their chains, but whether they have a sense of morality. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of enlightened and (let us all hope) shortly to be enfranchised women have, and that for that reason the passage into law of the Representation of the People Bill, 1917, will be the death-knell of the iniquitous Divorce Reform Bill which the writer advocates. The proposed Bill is immoral, absolutely opposed to Christian teaching, and is the thin end of the wedge of the institution of polygamy. The chief reason given in support of this proposal is that the present law tends to increase the number of illicit and secret unions. What an argument! One might on similar grounds advocate a relaxation of the law against stealing because of the prevalence of theft. No; the right remedy is just the opposite to that advocated. If illicit unions are prevalent, the law must be strengthened against bigamy. Adultery would still be adultery even if legalised by the State. . . .

In conclusion, I may say that I write as a life-long Suffragette, and it is because I feel so deeply on this question, and feel that all Suffrage workers should concentrate on getting the great Representation of the People Bill on the Statute Book before Christmas, that I protest very strongly against any attempt being made to deal with this subject until women are enfranchised by its passage into law.—Yours, &c.,

A. L. GREEN.

80, Thornhill Road, Islington, N.

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VOTES FOR WOMEN

27, CHANCERY LANE, W.C.

Telegraphic Address:—Unisuffra, Holb., London
Telephone:—Holborn 5880

NOVEMBER, 1917.

HANDS OFF OUR BILL!

The serious check to the progress of the Reform Bill, threatened by the decision arrived at during the debates of October 17 and 18, when the House again met in Committee to discuss it, is fresh evidence of the obstacles this measure may still have to encounter before it is placed upon the statute book. Until that moment is reached, no assurance of victory can be ours; and only when the Royal assent is given will Suffragists be able to relax their vigilance, and to congratulate themselves on having won this hardly-contested outpost of the women's position.

We do not wish to exaggerate the probable effect upon our Bill of the Government's determination to include in it a redistribution scheme for Ireland. Possibly, before these pages are in the hands of our readers, its effect may have been neutralised by a change in the Irish situation, or a modification of the Government's policy. One of the disabilities under which this journal suffers through appearing only once a month is the risk it runs of elaborating a danger which may have been averted by the time the paper reaches the public. But if this should happen in the present case—as we fervently hope it may—we would still call upon Suffragists of all kinds to see in the recent victory of a Unionist minority a proof of the power that still lies in the hands of our enemies to wreck and obstruct a measure that is ardently desired by the majority of our countrymen and countrywomen. For delay at this juncture is a danger in itself; and if the Unionists who won on this occasion were actuated by a desire to score an Ulster triumph and not to injure the Bill, we know full well that the enemies of the Bill in both Houses are ready to take full advantage of the chance thus given them to injure its prospects.

The Facts of the Situation

What are the facts? By the compromise arrived at in the Speaker's Conference the franchise proposals were to apply to Ireland, but redistribution was not included in this recommendation. The reason for its exclusion—the assumption that a Home Rule Act was in being which would involve redistribution—would seem to most people to be strengthened, not weakened, by the existence of the Convention, which is now endeavouring to draw up a new constitution for Ireland. Until that Convention has reported, an independent English attempt to dabble in Irish redistribution becomes therefore, at least a work of supererogation, if not a hostile move; and that was the view taken by the Nationalist Party in the House, who received the support of the Irish Secretary. That the Ulster Unionists, perhaps hoping for a General Election before the settlement of Ireland is ratified, and certainly knowing that redistribution would increase their representation, should attempt to redress an ancient injustice to themselves by forcing Irish redistribution into the Reform Bill, is a logical, and, from a selfish party point of view, strictly justifiable position. It is even possible, according to the view of the Dublin correspondent of the *Times*, that the Sinn Feiners would not resent the redistribution proposal. But the opposition of the Nationalists throughout the debate in question proved beyond all doubt that the proposal would not be accepted by a united Ireland: it can therefore be regarded in no other light than controversial, and to introduce the element of controversy at this stage of the Bill, when all previous attempts to upset the Speaker's compromise—notably, attempts to widen the women's clauses—have been denounced as dangerous to the success of the Bill, seems to us to have little justification of any sort. The best that can be said for the Government's extraordinary concession to the Ulster Unionists is that it is one degree better than Sir George Cave's first proposal to exclude Ireland altogether from the Bill. That suggestion, if persisted in, would, we trust, have roused a storm of protest from English Suffragists, who know how long and how gallantly Irish women have toiled and suffered for their enfranchisement.

The Danger of Delay

The danger of delay is even more serious than the danger of controversy. Sir George Cave's view was optimistic on this point. "We think," he said, "that—

> it is the duty of the Government to take upon themselves the task of preparing a scheme of redistribution and putting that scheme before the House at a later stage of this Bill. . . . We ought to take steps to get a scheme prepared, and when it is ready—probably in the Report stage of the Bill—we should, unless matters occur to make it unnecessary, bring that scheme before the House. . . . I hope the House may be willing to postpone the further consideration of this question, and await the proposals of the Government, which will be made at a later stage of the Bill.

Sir George Cave's hope that the scheme may not be wanted, after all (owing to the possible and timely issue of the Convention's report, including a scheme of redistribution), is shared by the *Nation*, and is, indeed, the brightest aspect of the whole matter. But we cannot accept his view that the addition of Irish redistribution, if this course does continue necessary, will not materially delay the Bill. Mr Dillon was emphatic on this point, saying that the Boundary Commission in Ireland, which it is proposed to set up, could not possibly do its work in a few weeks; its report would probably not be ready before the end of December, and the debates on it in the House would certainly be lengthy. In addition—and here is the point of all others that Suffragists have to note—the Bill itself would be jeopardised by the delay "Are you going to hang it up?" he asked; and he went on to make the following ominous statement:—

> I know there is a very powerful party in this country, and a considerable one in this House, who will wait on these proposals because it will give an excuse for hanging up the Bill, and perhaps give them a chance of killing it. At all events, it will give them a very good excuse for a long delay. . . . It has enemies, and powerful enemies. If I am not ill-informed there is a scheme on foot which may yet succeed in killing it, and I think the Home Secretary by his speech to-night has placed a very considerable weapon, as will be seen hereafter, in the hands of those against us in Ireland.

The Enemy is Alert

Suffragists cannot afford to neglect the warning contained in Mr. Dillon's speech. The extended life of this Parliament ceases on November 30: the Reform Bill cannot become law and a new Register be set up unless this Parliament is prolonged at least another four or five months. Mr. Bonar Law has announced the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill shortly to prolong Parliament; but we know from what has occurred before how all the enemies of progress (who are always willing to appeal to the country on a stale Register that in no sense reflects even the men of the country) will be ready to use this opportunity, if it can possibly be so used, to force a General Election, and so undo all that has been accomplished in steering the Bill through Committee, in bringing us within sight of our longed-for goal. That is the danger of delay. That, incredible as it may sound, is what may actually occur unless the people of this country, men and women alike, who are deeply concerned in the passage of the Representation of the People Bill, refuse to allow it to happen.

No More Procrastination

We do not despair—least of all because we see clearly the dangers ahead. There would be ground for despair only if Suffragists were blind to the pitfalls that still lurk in their path. United Labour, at its Congress in September, demanded the speedy passage of the Reform Bill. The Prime Minister met this demand with an assurance, given to the powerful Labour deputation that waited upon him on September 28, that it was the intention of the Government to afford every facility for the passage into law of this measure, "the urgent necessity of which was apparent to them all." Labour will assuredly not allow that pledge to become a dead letter simply because the enemies of the Bill have used the Irish situation in order to secure a temporary delay in its progress through Parliament. There is also the chance that even that temporary delay may not occur, if the Convention issues its report in time to make it unnecessary. There are, happily, grounds for hope as well as grounds for anxiety. We are always better off than the enemy, for, as Burke's saying serves perpetually to remind us, if the enemy can prevent our winning for a day, we have the certain knowledge that the enemy cannot win at all. With that knowledge ever in our minds, let us make it clear to the Government and to Parliament, by every means in our power, that we are fully aware of the harm already done to the Bill by the procrastinations of last summer, that it is their business to get this measure on the statute book without further delay, and that nothing must be allowed to happen that can bring about an appeal to the country until it has become law, until the voice of the country has been made articulate at the polling booth.

NATIONAL HOUSEKEEPING

The Financial Problems Awaiting Women Voters

By F. W. PETHICK LAWRENCE

2.—NATIONAL BORROWING

It is easy to understand what takes place when an individual is said to "borrow." Somebody else lends him money which he promptly exchanges for the things he wants—clothes and food and shelter, or perhaps the implements of his trade. At the same time he becomes in debt to the lender, and some day has to repay him the amount lent as well as having usually to pay interest each year on the borrowed money. When a nation is said to "borrow," the phenomenon is more complicated. In the first place the word "nation" is not always used in the same sense. Sometimes it is used of the country as a whole and of all the people in it, as when we say that the national wealth consists of the rivers and docks, the factories and the mines, the houses and the fields, etc. The expression "national" revenue is often used in this sense to mean the combined incomes of all the men, women and children in the country, which before the war was reckoned at about 2,400 million pounds. At other times the word "nation" is used to mean the fictitious entity called the State, which is controlled by the government, and employs the soldiers and sailors and a number of civilian workers. The expression "national" revenue, used in this sense, means the money obtained by the State in taxes and spent in the upkeep of the army and navy, in grants to education and other Civil Services; before the war it was about 200 millions a year.

Which "nation" is it that borrows in order to finance a war? Evidently, the second "nation," which I have designated the "State." And the "national debt" is thus clearly a State obligation. But what really matters is how far this borrowing by the State affects the country as a whole and all the people in it; and that is what I now proceed to discuss. It will be found that the result is different according to the form which the borrowing takes. A State has three sources from which it can borrow: (1) from foreigners; (2) from its own ordinary citizens; (3) from the banks in its own country. I shall consider each of these separately.

A Foreign Loan

A State when it borrows from foreigners, either from a foreign State (as in the recent American Government loan to the British Government), or from individual foreigners (as in the earlier British loans taken up by American citizens), is acting exactly like an individual borrower. It exchanges the borrowed money for goods, which it proceeds to import, and remains under an obligation to the lender which it will some time have to repay both in interest and principal. Moreover, as the citizens of a country are ultimately responsible for their own State's obligations, it is correct to say that the nation—meaning now the country as a whole—has incurred this liability. And if the money has been spent, not in reproductive capital, but in perishable munitions of war, the country as a whole has been impoverished to the exact amount of the foreign loan. If this process were repeated indefinitely, the time would come when the country as a whole became "bankrupt," because the internal resources were not sufficient to cover its external liabilities. This has happened several times in history, notably in the case of Egypt, prior to Lord Cromer's administration.

Internal Loans.

When a State goes to its own citizens to borrow money it is doing something entirely different. And if those citizens find the money by stinting themselves, or going without luxuries which they would otherwise have consumed, there is no immediate loss of wealth to the country as a whole. All that has happened is that the productive power of the country, instead of being utilised in making motor cars and expensive food and clothes, etc., for individuals, has been employed in making gun-carriages, etc., for the State, and in providing food and clothing for the State's soldiers. Moreover, however often this process is repeated, the nation—meaning thereby the country as a whole—cannot become bankrupt, because the creditors of the State (i.e., the holders of war loan) are themselves citizens, and therefore ultimately liable with other citizens for the repayment of the debt. This is not to say, however, that internal loans, even if they were all of this character, would be harmless; for, though they do not affect the total quantity of wealth in the country, they do affect the distribution of that wealth. Speaking broadly, they make the rich richer and the poor poorer; for it is mainly the rich who can afford to save and take up war-loan, while the poor in their capacity as citizens become in part responsible for the debts incurred by the State.

Moreover, a great deal of the money which ordinary citizens put into war loan is not obtained by stinting or going without luxuries. In many cases the money, if it had not been lent to the Government, would have been used for the creation of new productive capital or for repairing old capital. The country as a whole is poorer for this diversion. We see it to-day in the shortage of good houses, in the "letting down" of railway rolling stock, and in a great many other things.

Another source from which the ordinary citizen gets the money he puts into war-loan is the sale to foreigners* of investments, either foreign or domestic. An internal loan, paid for in this way, is in effect subscribed by foreigners, and the result to the country is the same as that of a direct foreign loan. It is estimated that something like a thousand million pounds of securities have been sold by people of this country to Americans during this war, and our country as a whole is poorer by the whole of this amount. Finally the ordinary citizen may get the money to buy war loan by borrowing from his bank on his securities. In this case the loan is to all intents and purposes subscribed by the bank, and its effect is the same as a bank loan, which forms the subject of the next paragraph.

Loans from the Banks

A great deal of the money which the Government have used to pay for the war has been subscribed by the banks. At first sight there does not seem to be any vital difference between money lent by the banker and money lent by private individuals; but in reality there is a great deal of difference. Whereas the ordinary person actually *pays* his money, the Bank only gives a *promise* to pay and makes an entry in its books to this effect. The Government pays for all the things it buys by cheque, and the contractors who get these cheques pay them into the banks and draw other cheques against them, and so on. Throughout all the series of transactions the banks do not have to pay anything at all. They only make entries in their books.

What happens really is that the quantity of currency is increased. There are a certain number of things in the country for sale, and ordinary people come into the market with their ordinary money to buy them; the Government come also with their money, consisting of bank cheques, and they all bid against one another and prices go up. Ordinary people get less for their money than they otherwise would do, and are compelled to that extent to go short. Economists describe this phenomenon as "inflation," and compare the floating of loans among bankers to pay for the war with the debasing of the curency practised by Kings in old days for a similar purpose. Inflation presses hardest at the time on the very poor, and on people with fixed incomes, and it also raises a number of very difficult problems for the future.

In a concluding article I shall discuss some of these problems and deal with the general financial and economic outlook after the war.

(To be concluded in our December issue.)

* If the sale is not to foreigners, but to fellow citizens, we must follow up the matter to the person who ultimately finds the money, and see how he provides it. If the sale is to the Government, and the Government disposes of the securities to foreigners, it is the same as if it were sold to foreigners direct.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

To United Suffragists Only

The attention of the members of the U.S. is drawn to the section entitled "Executive Committee" on page 2 of the Constitution and Rules of the United Suffragists. In pursuance of the rules there laid down I hereby give notice that nominations for candidates for the Executive Committee (1918) must reach me not later than December 20th, this being not less than three clear weeks before the Council meeting to be held in January next.

The following members of the Executive Committee are due for retirement in January next: Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, Mr. Albert Dawson, Major H. J. Gillespie, D.S.O., Mr. Gerald Gould, Mrs. Ben Webster, Mrs. Whelen. All these are standing for re-election, but other nominations may be sent in.

Members are reminded that candidates may be nominated by Branches or by a nomination signed by five members of the Society; also that candidates must have been members of the Society for at least six months previous to the date of election.

Every member of the Society *who has paid his or her membership fee of* 1*s.* (*minimum*) will be able to vote for members of the Executive. Will those, therefore, who have neglected to do this, at once send me their fees for 1917?

(Signed) **Bertha Brewster**
(*Hon. Secretary*).

THE FUND.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Almond.....	1	0	0
Mrs. Anderson ...	0	3	0
Mrs. Ayrton	20	0	0
The Misses Barrowman	0	5	0
Miss Brady	0	5	0
Miss Dalgliesh ...	0	2	6
Miss K. Ellison...	0	3	0
Miss K. Ennis ...	0	3	0
Mr. and Mrs. Friedeberg	0	2	0
Mrs. Gandell.....	3	0	0
Miss Gannaway...	1	1	0
Miss Hicks.....	0	10	0
Mr. Laurence Housman	0	2	6
Mrs. Pethick Lawrence	13	0	0
Mrs. McCall	1	1	0
Miss Mears	0	3	0
Miss Osborne.....	3	0	0
Miss E. Slay	0	2	0
Mrs. Baillie-Weaver	2	0	0
Miss Robson Young	0	2	6
Mrs. Israel Zangwill	3	0	0
	£49	5	6

UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. 2. Telephone, Holborn 5880

Colours: Purple, White and Orange

THE COMMITTEE

Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck
Miss Brewster (*Hon. Secretary*)
Mr. Albert Dawson
Major H. J. Gillespie, D.S.O. (*Hon. Treasurer*)
Mr. Gerald Gould
Mrs. Ayrton Gould (*Hon. Treasurer pro tem.*)
Mr. Laurence Housman
Mr. George Lansbury
Mr. Henry W. Nevinson
Miss Evelyn Sharp
Mrs Ben Webster (Miss May Whitty)
Mrs. Elaine Whelen

THE CAMPAIGN

Monday, November 5; 7.30 p.m.—Open Meeting.—Corporation Chambers, Bolton. Speaker: Miss Collinge, on "The Necessity for Moral Instruction in Schools."

Tuesday, November 6; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club, 92, Borough Road, S.E. 1. Speaker: Dr. Ettie Sayer, on "How to Keep Clean."

Saturday, November 10; 3 p.m.—Public Meeting.—The Library, Prince Arthur Road, Hampstead. Speakers: Miss Lind-af-Hageby on "Citizenship" Rev. J. M. E. Rose (chair).

Saturday, November 10; 2.30 p.m.—Joint Conference of Local Organizations on "Women in Industry."—St. George's Congregational School, Bolton. Public admitted. Principal Speaker: Miss I. O. Ford.

Tuesday, November 13; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Mrs. Pethick Lawrence.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16; 6 p.m.—OPEN MEETING FOR U.S. MEMBERS AND FRIENDS. SMALL ESSEX HALL (ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.). SPEAKERS: U.S. COMMITTEE.

Tuesday, November 20; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting. U.S. Women's Club.

Tuesday, November 27; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Mr. John Scurr.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8; 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.—CHRISTMAS SALE IN AID OF U.S. WOMEN'S CLUB. CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER. (See page 307.)

U.S. MEETING

Small Essex Hall, Friday, November 16, 6 p.m.

There will be a meeting of U.S. members and friends in the Small Essex Hall (Essex Street, Strand, W.C.—near Temple Station) on Friday, November 16, at 6 p.m. The political situation, a momentous one just now, will be discussed; also the activities of the U.S., notably the Christmas Sale on December 8. Members of the U.S. Committee will be present and will speak. The late afternoon has been fixed for the meeting, to enable those who are doing Government and other work—the bulk of the U.S. members—to attend the meeting on the way home; so a good attendance is hoped for.

OPEN AIR CAMPAIGN

Organiser: Mrs. Gregory, 6, Gibson's Hill, Norwood, S.E. 9.

On Sunday, September 23, Miss M. Hodge and Mrs. Gregory spoke to a most interested audience on the present situation and that of the immediate future, Miss Hodge drawing on her experience in the Colonies to show the work that women must do in this country directly their enfranchisement is an accomplished fact. Unfortunately, the weather was too bad for the meeting to be held on October 1. The last meeting of the series will be held after this goes to press, when it is hoped that the weather will not prevent Miss Wertheim and Mrs. Gregory from securing an audience.

U.S. WOMEN'S CLUB

92, Borough Road, S.E.

Secretary: Miss V. Aitken. Tel.: Hop 4172

The activities of the Club have been a little curtailed during the past month owing to the activities of the raiders. However, things are again in full swing, meetings and concerts are well attended, and members are busy preparing for the Club Stall, which they are contributing to the Bazaar in December. All donations should be brought to Miss Aitken, and will be acknowledged in VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Jumble Sale.—We are holding a Jumble Sale very shortly, to assist the Club funds. Contributions of clothes, boots, shoes, household goods, &c., are urgently required, and will be gratefully received.

Meetings and Concerts.—Thanks are due to Miss Newcomb, Miss Nina Boyle, and Mrs. John Scurr for their interesting lectures, and to Mr. Frank Holland for the concert he so kindly arranged. We should be glad of more help in the matter of concerts on Wednesday evenings. Would anyone who is able to sing or play for us kindly communicate with Mr. Threadgold (41, Colville Gardens, W.) who has most generously undertaken to provide all the concerts in future.

Donations.—The following gifts are gratefully acknowledged:—Mrs. McCall, 10s. and armchair; Miss Coster, parcel for Jumble Sale; Kensington U.S., cups and saucers; Mrs. White, parcel for Jumble Sale; the clerks of the Blythe Road Savings Bank, £2; Miss Hilda Austin, sugar.

Wanted.—We appeal earnestly for gifts of tea, sugar bread, jam, honey, marmalade, coffee, cocoa, to enable us to keep down the price of the refreshments.

ASHFORD U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Mr. John Marsh, 45, Royd's Road. Willsborough, Kent. Organizer: Miss Maude White, Magazine House, Winchelsea, Sussex

Councillor Ellis, J.P., prospective Liberal candidate for the Rye Division, has promised to speak at the P.S.A. on the first Sunday in December. He is a pronounced adult Suffragist; for this reason, as well as the fact that he is a fluent speaker, a large audience should welcome him. A Jumble Sale in aid of funds will be held some time during the first week in December. Mrs. Bankes has kindly promised to help to organise it. Further details as to time and place of sale will be reported in VOTES FOR WOMEN next month. In the meantime, will members please write to the organiser at above address if they are able to send any jumbles? Many thanks to Mrs. Jolly and Mrs. Barnes, who have kindly promised to send their little girls out with the papers every month. Is it possible for anyone to undertake to sell this paper at the Railway Works once a month? The Secretary would be delighted to receive names of those willing to do it. Fifteen new subscribers to the paper in two months! Most encouraging for Miss Jellicoe. No evening meeting will be held on Sunday, October 28. Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett is speaking at the P.S.A. in the afternoon. Gratefully acknowledged: Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, £3; Mrs. Saker, 1s.; Mrs. Clayton, 1s.; Mrs. Wind, 6d.

BOLTON U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss S. W. Holden, 110, Tottington Road, Harwood, Bolton

The annual members' meeting was held on Monday, October 8. Miss E. M. Gordon presided. The Secretary and Treasurer presented the report of the year's work. The following officers were elected:—President, Mrs. J. Almond; Vice-President, Mr. William Addison; Secretary-Treasurer, Miss S. W. Holden; Librarian and Lit. Sec., Miss A. Gordon; Committee, Misses M. Dawson, R. Donnelly, E. M. Gordon, Mrs. Spencer, Mrs. Waite, Messrs. J. Darbyshire, D. Leach, and H. Newhouse; London Representative, Mrs. R. Cavendish Bentinck. Miss Holden reported that the Committee elected by the various local organisations had arranged for a second Conference in November, the subject for discussion being "Women in Industry." (See Campaign List.) Also that one outcome of the first Conference was that a scheme for a Day Nursery for children under school age had been prepared by a sub-committee and presented to the local authorities, whose approval it received, and that arrangements were now going forward for the establishment of such a nursery.

HAMPSTEAD U.S.

Hon. Secretaries: Miss Daisy Solomon, 64, Pattison Road, N.W. 2; Miss E. Engert, 3, Pattison Road, N.W. 2.

Our autumn work was inaugurated by a drawing-room meeting kindly given by Mrs. Sadd Brown on the evening of October 18. Miss Margaret Hodge gave a very interesting lecture on "W. T. Stead and his Work for the Woman's Movement." Mrs. Saul Solomon was in the Chair.

On Saturday, November 10, we are to have the pleasure of hearing Miss Lind-af-Hageby speak on "Citizenship," and the Rev. J. M. E. Rose will preside. This meeting will be held in the Library, Prince Arthur Road (three minutes from Hampstead Tube Station), at 3 p.m., after which tea will be served. Admission free; tea 6d. Members are specially asked to make this meeting known among their friends.

Our branch has again undertaken the Provision Stall at the forthcoming U.S. Women's War Club Sale. We are most anxious that every member should help us by gifts of money or kind, and it would greatly assist if they will send in their promises to the Honorary Secretaries as soon as possible.

KENSINGTON U.S.

Hon. Sec., Miss Postlethwaite, 27, Warwick Chambers, Pater Street, Kensington, W. 8.

It is with great regret that the shop has had to be closed, owing to the premises being required by the landlord. Papers can be had at the above address, or from Mrs. Wise, newsagent, 43, Earl's Court Road. No further orders for printing can be undertaken until fresh arrangements have been made to set up the press again. Thanks are due to all those who have so kindly helped the cause by patronizing the Holland Press. Contributions are much needed (either in money or kind) towards the Toy Stall, which has been undertaken in Kensington for the benefit of the U.S. Christmas Sale on December 8. Will members please help in some way?

HENDON WOMEN'S FRANCHISE SOCIETY

(Affiliated to United Suffragists)

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. McCabe, 49, Bridge Lane, Hendon, N.W. 4.

We hope during next month to hear an account of the wonderful life story of Mary Slessor, the Aberdeen servant girl who went to India and did such great work there. Again we shall be indebted to the kindness of Miss Harriet Newcomb, to whom it is always such a pleasure to listen. The proceeds of the meeting will be handed over to the local Day Nursery. Anyone wishing for particulars will receive them on applying to me.

The Conference on "Should Women Organize as Voters?" was held on the 10th inst., at 1A, Arcade House. There was a good attendance, and Miss Newcomb spoke both ably and humorously in the affirmative; and Mrs. Richards, of the London Society for Women's Suffrage, in a short but eloquent speech, opposed the forming of a Women's Party. Many of the audience joined in the discussion, and our Chairman, Mrs. How Martyn, showed us how much was due in favour of "Party Politics," as well as there being so many defects. Miss Newcomb most kindly promised to help us with her own experiences as a voter, and we hope to arrange further meetings shortly for this purpose.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER,

FRIDAY, Nov. 30, and SATURDAY, Dec. 1, from 2 p.m.

Opener First Day - **Miss LILLAH McCARTHY.**
Second Day - - - **Miss EVA MOORE.**

Come and buy your Christmas Presents—all kinds of useful and fancy articles.

The following Societies are taking part: Free Church League for Women Suffrage, Independent W.S.P.U., United Suffragists, and Women's Freedom League Settlement.

Admission: 1/- before 5 on Friday, after 5, 6d.; Saturday 6d. all day. Tickets from, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

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COMPARISON OF PUNISHMENTS

LIGHT SENTENCES

Assault by a Boy of Sixteen

The *Morning Advertiser* (October 15) reports a case of a boy clerk of sixteen, charged at the Guildhall before Alderman Sir Louis A. Newton with an unprovoked assault upon a porter, whom he knocked insensible with a violent blow on the jaw, loosening all his teeth. It was stated that the defendant had paid compensation of four guineas.

Sentence: *Fined 20s.*

Assault on a Woman

The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (September 17) reports a case of a miner charged at Doncaster with a violent assault upon a young woman, whom he knocked down and kicked. She was unconscious for nine hours.

Sentence: *Two months' imprisonment.*

Living on Immoral Earnings

The *Western Evening Herald* (October 5) reports a case of a man charged at Plymouth Police Court, before Messrs. J. R. Lake and R. A. J. Walling, with living on the earnings of prostitution; by keeping a lodging-house for girls between the ages of fourteen and twenty, whom he forced to earn money in this way. There were previous convictions for brothel-keeping.

Sentence: *Three months' hard labour.*

HEAVY SENTENCES

Theft by a Girl of Sixteen

The *Daily News* (October 5) reports a case of a girl of sixteen, charged before the Recorder at Leeds Quarter Sessions with stealing a purse. The police described her as "a dangerous and expert pickpocket."

Sentence: *Three years' Borstal treatment.*

Burglary

The *Times* (October 16) reports a case of a young woman, charged at Walsall Quarter Sessions with burglary. She got through a window into a magistrate's house, had a meal, dressed herself in the housemaid's clothes, and fell asleep.

Sentence: *Twelve months' imprisonment.*

Stealing Luggage

The *Morning Advertiser* (October 11) reports a case of an engineer, charged at the Central Criminal Court before the Recorder with stealing luggage in three separate instances from passengers on the Great Northern and London and North Western Railways.

Sentence: *Five years' penal servitude.*

WHITE SLAVERY IN PLYMOUTH

At a time like the present, when the military have powers under the Defence of the Realm Act to deport prostitutes from the district in which they have been convicted, a case like the third one recorded in the left-hand column of the above table of comparisons deserves serious attention. Here is a man, previously convicted on more than one occasion for brothel-keeping (we mention this, not because we think previous convictions ought to count when a prisoner is again sentenced for the same offence, but because in cases of theft, forgery, and so on, previous convictions *are* taken into account in this way), who receives only three months' imprisonment for corrupting girls, from the age of fourteen upwards, whom he got into his clutches as lodgers and then forced on to the streets to bring him money when they could not otherwise meet his exorbitant charges. The evidence in this horrible case is too long to be reproduced here: a full account may be found in the *Western Evening Herald* (October 5). The fact that the Bench regretted they could not give a longer sentence supports our contention, often expressed before, that these cases should be sent to the Assizes.

Vicar's Admirable Comment

A letter from the Rev. Prebendary Perowne, vicar of Plymouth, appeared in the *Western Morning News* (October 11), which so exactly expresses our views on this whole subject that we reproduce it herewith. Our only criticism of it is in connection with the last sentence, and here we hasten to assure the writer that increasing numbers of women have long been trying to remedy the evils of which he speaks, but cannot do so effectually without (1) the help of votes, and (2) the help of men. Women look forward to a future in which they will have both.

The Vicar's letter is as follows:—

"The case of the man Searle, reported in your issue of Saturday, must have sent a thrill of shame through all who read it. Here is a man who, for the past year at least, has been making from £50 to £60 per week out of some twenty-four prostitutes who were his lodgers in disgracefully insanitary conditions, and whom he practically forced to ply their trade for his benefit. The magistrates imposed the maximum penalty—three months' hard labour! And there were two previous convictions of a similar nature against him! Now, I would ask two questions. First, how is it that this case was not sent to the Assizes? If the answer is that the legal difficulties would not allow of it, my answer is that the sooner the law is altered the better. Penal servitude is meted out to women for much less serious offences than this. Secondly, when this man comes out, is he to be allowed to start again his infamous business in a modified form, which will enable him to defy the police? Or can he be deported from Plymouth under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, which have enabled the authorities to turn out convicted prostitutes on their release from prison? If not, why are women to be penalised and men have differential treatment? I have deliberately put my questions in such a form as to raise this matter of sex legislation. It is high time that the whole question of both the moral and the statute law in connection with this particular subject were dealt with on a basis of absolute equality between the sexes. Until it is realised that the same law ought to apply to the man as to the woman in the whole region of purity, we shall never make any progress; and it is to the women of England that we must look to take the lead in this matter."

"One Law for the Man . . ."

The writer of the above letter speaks advisedly when he implies that there is one law for the man and another for the woman in police-court charges of immorality. In a case heard at Ker Street Police Court, Devonport, on October 8, three men and three women were charged with indecency; the three men were let off with a fine of 10s. each, while the three women were sent to prison without the option of a fine. Some months ago, the writer of a letter in the *Western Evening Herald* (March 3, 1917) spoke of the tendency in Plymouth to arrest only the woman in such cases, and alluded to a case at Torpoint where the magistrates sentenced two women to the maximum punishment, but there was no mention of the men culprits at all. It is clear that no progress will ever be made in dealing with this highly-complicated and difficult question until men and women are dealt with on equal terms.

The Double Standard

In the September issue of the *Shield* (organ of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene), a protest is also made against the double moral standard, which is accepted in the practice of prosecuting the women who are found in brothels and letting the men go free. It mentions a recent case at Nottingham, where a house was raided and a woman "described as a prostitute" was arrested and charged with aiding and abetting in the keeping of a brothel, but the officer with whom she was found was not charged at all. That he could have been charged is evident from accounts of similar cases at Lancaster and Newport, Mon., where the men found on the premises were convicted of "aiding and abetting" as well as the women. The *Shield* comments as follows:—

"We would respectfully submit to the magistrate that if it is a good thing to take penal action against brothels, the only logical and fair way to do it is to proceed by raid during the hours when the house is being used, and to arrest *all* persons found on the premises and charge them with aiding and abetting. It is a horrible and disgusting thing that women should keep brothels, but it is equally horrible and disgusting that men who are presumably educated men should use such places and pay others to do such dirty work."

THE JUVENILE OFFENDER

The problem of the juvenile offender is still with us, and we confess we see very little prospect of its solution while boys of sixteen can be fined for inflicting unprovoked bodily injury, and girls of sixteen can be sent to prison for three years on a charge of theft. (See above table of punishments.) The plea that the girl offender was known to the police as "a dangerous and expert pickpocket" seems to us an indictment of society and the penal system generally, which should have militated rather towards a sane and humane treatment of the child—in many circles of society a girl of sixteen is still only a child—than towards her incarceration in a prison for the three best years of her youth. For it must be remembered that Borstal treatment is carried on in a prison and under a prison régime. It may be an improvement on ordinary imprisonment, but it is still far short of the kind of treatment that is likely to convince high-spirited young people, with or without criminal tendencies, of the beneficent wisdom of the State to which they ought to be proud to belong.

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UNITED SUFFRAGISTS IN BOLTON

We have received the Annual Report of the Bolton branch of the United Suffragists, and it is typical of the spirit of that energetic and hard-working band of men and women. All through the past year it has maintained its monthly meetings, the speakers at these gatherings including the Rev. J. Ivory Cripps, of Southport, and Mr. Cook, of the Manchester Men's League. Among U.S. speakers were Mr. Darbyshire, Mr. Spencer, and Mr. Addison. The Bolton U.S. took the initiative in organizing a public meeting to advocate Adult Suffrage, in which some of the local bodies took part. Councillor Margaret Ashton and Mr. G. C. Armstrong were speakers, and the meeting was well reported in the Press.

During the year the Branch also co-operated with other Societies in promoting a joint Conference to discuss questions affecting women, and the Hon. Secretary was elected a member of the Convening Committee. The Report concludes with the words: "In summing up the past year's work, although we have done nothing startling, we have at least kept together and held ourselves ready for any emergency; and I think we can truly say that our comparative inactivity has been due to lack of occasion and not to a diminution of the suffrage spirit. The present is a critical period in the suffrage movement, and in a few days or weeks we may be called upon again to throw all our energies into the struggle. When the call comes it will find us prepared."

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN INDIA

In response to a desire on the part of many women from the Dominions of New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Canada to meet their Indian sisters and to hear their views on our common needs and aspirations, the Executive Committee of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union has arranged a series of afternoon meetings, with short speeches, followed by tea and open discussion. The first of these gatherings will be held at the Minerva Café (144, High Holborn) on Saturday, October 27, 3.30—6 p.m. At 3.45 Mrs. Chundra Sen will speak on "The Education of Women in India"; the Chair will be taken by Lady Muir Mackenzie. Tickets, 1s. each (including tea), may be obtained from Miss Hodge (13, Temple Fortune Court, N.W. 4), and should be applied for at once, as space is limited.

WOMEN AND POLICE COURTS.

The very interesting series of autumn lectures, inaugurated by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, will include two of special interest to women during November. On Friday, November 2, Mr. F. W. Barnett (Police Court Missionary) will lecture on "Work of the Police Court Mission," and the Chair will be taken by Commissioner Adelaide Cox (Salvation Army). On Friday, November 9, the Chair will be taken by Miss Constance Titè, and Mr. Cecil Chapman J.P., will speak on "The Position of Women under the Laws of England." Both lectures are at 5.30 p.m., and admission will be free.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISCUSSION MEETING in the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, Sunday, November 18th, at 5 p.m., opened by Miss Rebecca West. Subject: "The Real Sources of the Inequality of the Sexes." Admission 1s. Tickets from the Women's Freedom League, address above. Tea can be obtained from 4.15 to 4.55 at 6d.

THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE holds Public Meetings, Wednesday afternoons, at the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, at 3.30. Speakers: October 31st, Miss Abadam on "The Feminist Revision of Theological Values," and Miss Boyle, etc. Admission Free.

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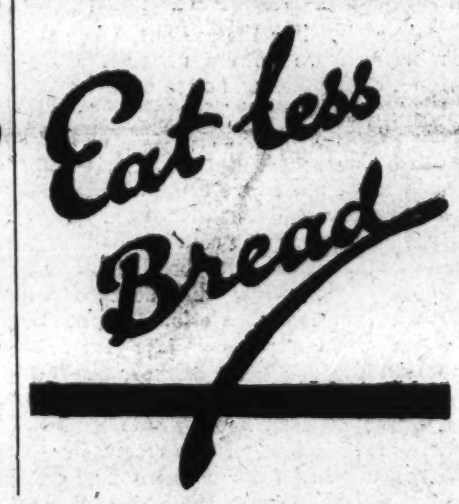

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